

KS4 Overview

Students who are interested in modern issues, like to ask difficult questions, enjoy discussion, and are prepared to take on different points of view will enjoy and thrive in this course. The GCSE Religious Education course explores how religious and non-religious thinkers have tackled some of the most vital and important questions that face us. As well as studying Christianity students will study Buddhism in depth. This will give them the chance to engage with a very different way of thinking about life and themselves. This insight into two very different belief systems and ways of life will help students to consider different points of view and evaluate their own ideas. These two religions account for almost 40% of the world's population. Studying what those people believe and do will give students a greater understanding of the world they live in.

Once they've examined different religious teachings and beliefs pupils will then explore how those beliefs can be applied to a range of contemporary moral problems and philosophical issues. This includes medical ethics, the environment, war, crime and punishment. Engaging with these issues will help pupils develop critical reasoning, such as how to create and evaluate arguments and how to defend their own views both verbally and in written form. These are essential skills for any pupil wanting to go on to study at A-level and beyond. But more than this, pupils who take the course will gain an in-depth understanding of two of the major world religions, an essential feature of any good general education, and also invaluable in the attempt to better understand the world that they inhabit.

The Year 10 Curriculum

The first unit students will study is on Christian beliefs and teachings. Students will learn about Christianity as the majority religion of the UK, responsible for the creation of many of our institutions and values. However they will also learn about Christianity as a global religion, with almost a third of the world's population being Christian. In this unit we learn Christian beliefs about the nature of God, the creation of the world and differing views on the afterlife. We then learn Christian views on Jesus, the incarnation, salvation and atonement.

In our second unit we study the key beliefs of Buddhism. This will help students to learn a completely different perspective from Christianity and to look at the world with a different point of view. Buddhism is a global religion with a non-western source. In an increasingly globalised world, understanding non-western ways of thinking will be vital for students. In this unit we learn about the life of the Buddha and the Four Noble Truths. We then learn Buddhist beliefs about Dhamma, Karma and the Three Marks of Existence. This will be a fascinating and useful opportunity to take on 3,000 years worth of wisdom and ideas about how to live a good life.

We then begin "thematic studies" where we apply the beliefs we learnt about Christianity and Buddhism to the modern world. Students will learn religious, philosophical and ethical arguments about key issues and their impact and influence in the modern world. The first unit we will do this for is "Religion and Life". In this unit we critically examine and debate ideas about the origins of the universe, the value of the world, animal experimentation, the use and abuse of the environment and the use of animals for food. We then discuss the origins and value of human life with application of religious and ethical ideas to issues like euthanasia, abortion and life after death.

In our second thematic unit, and final unit of year 10, we study ethical and religious issues surrounding relationships and families. This will include religious and secular ideas on the value and purpose of family

and the value and purpose of marriage. We will then examine key issues from a religious and ethical view point on homosexuality, contraception, divorce and gender equality.

By the end of Year 10 students will have learnt the key beliefs of two major religions and be able to apply these beliefs to some of the most important debates and issues we face in the 21st century.